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Perceptions of Europe in British and Italian TV news programmes

Silvia de Candia, Marco Venuti

Abstract

The present paper focuses on the way Europe is construed in a corpus of British and Italian TV news programmes. We focused on TV news programmes rather than on print media since, according to a Eurobarometer report (Eurobarometer 74, 2011), 56% of EU citizens use television as a primary source for information about the EU.

News programmes were collected and orthographically transcribed from TG1 and TG5 at 20h00 in Italy, and BBC1 at 18h00 and ITV1 at 18h30 in the UK from 12 February to 6 April 2007, as part of the IntUne project. Starting from previous studies focusing on the structure of TV news bulletins (Haarman and Lombardo 2009), a specific XML annotation was added to the texts in order to encode metadata relative to source, date, the structure of news stories and speaker information in order to make use of contextual information in the interpretation of linguistic data available through the corpus. The use of comparable corpora provides the means to carry out an analysis of media texts, building models bottom up from data rather than starting from a hypothesis, while still being able to look at the contexts of culture, the environment in which the text was produced, and the context of situation, the immediate environment of the language in use. This enables the researcher to generalise from the data whilst keeping in mind the dangers of making broad assumptions from a single textual context.

Bearing these methodological premises in mind we analysed all the occurrences of Europe/Europa in the two subcorpora, highlighting how the term is highly polysemous shifting from a geographical space to a political, historical, and cultural unit. The analysis makes it possible to compare the differing perceptions of Europe reflected in British and Italian TV news programmes during the period under study.

1. Introduction

The present study will attempt to offer some insights into the linguistic and cultural differences between Italian and British broadcasters' expression of *Europe/Europa* and offers a description of how the concept of 'Europeness' is discursively represented across British and Italian TV news programmes¹. Our investigation is specifically focused on the language of TV news programmes as we believe that broadcast news has been a major source of news information for the public since the 1950s (Harrison 2000: 45) and, more specifically, since 56% of EU citizens stated that they use television as a primary source for information about the EU (Eurobarometer 74, 2011).

Other studies have recently focused on the coverage of EU institutions and European countries in television news. These range from the way European politics and issues are framed in Dutch news (Semetko and Valkenburg 2000) to the coverage of key EU events in both print and broadcast news (De Vreese 2001, De Vreese, Peter and Semetko 2001), from a comparative investigation of how news media in Britain, Germany, and the Netherlands covered the work of the EU Convention (Gleissner and De Vreese 2005) to the role given by British, French and German public service television to stories from other European countries (Groothues 2004).

What these studies have in common is an approach that privileges a quantitative coding and analysis of content and a prevalent focus on the news coverage of major events. Even if some of the issues raised in these studies are similar to our focus, that is the way *Europe* is construed in TV news programmes, there are two main differences: our analysis is mainly a linguistic investigation of language in use, and our corpus is not concerned with key events only. Even if this may be a drawback, due to a lack of important news items, it provides a better picture of the emphasis British and Italian broadcasters usually place on *Europe*.

Our analysis takes into account the discourse of broadcast news, with respect to all participants involved in the news bulletin routine. In

¹ Our study is based on the lexical item *Europe/Europa* only, rather than including related expressions such as *European Union/Unione europea* and their acronyms *EU/Ue*, all referring explicitly to the political institution, since we wanted to focus on the polysemous nature of the term in news reporting. An analysis of what is described as *European/Europeo(a,i,e)* (61 and 166 occurrences respectively) in the TV news programmes is beyond the scope of this publication.

particular, we follow Hartley's idea that TV news voices do not simply speak, they are "subordinated" and "orchestrated" within a news story. They include *reality* and *accessed* voices (Hartley 1982: 109-111). The former include news presenters, correspondents and reporters on location, whose voices are perceived as "fully naturalized", definitive and "right" in keeping with their professional status as well-known journalists. On the other hand, *accessed* voices of legitimated persons, people having a high social or professional status, and ordinary people (respectively LPs and VOXs hereafter), in the form of interviews or quoted material, have a more provisional status since they are arranged and re-arranged by the journalists' voices within the whole news item. Our analysis of the usage of *Europe/Europa* considers all broadcast voices, taking into account the distribution of the two terms between *reality* and *accessed* voices, as they both play an important role in making sense of news stories.

2. The IntUne project

The present study is based on the analysis of the *IntUne* corpus, a collection of media texts compiled over two months in 2007, as part of a Sixth Framework European project, *Integrated and United: a Quest for Citizenship in an "ever closer Europe"*². The research project – involving four main areas of analysis: élite, mass, experts and media – focused on three issues: identity, representation and the scope of governance in the European Union. Within the media group a corpus of English, French, Italian and Polish media texts (both press and TV news programmes) was specifically collected to carry out a number of analyses, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches within the framework of *Corpus Assisted Discourse Studies*, or CADS (Partington 2004, 2008, see also this issue), in order to investigate the representation of Europe, across the four languages and cultures.

The linguistic observations carried out in this paper are concerned with the British and the Italian television sub-corpora only. British and Italian News programmes were collected and orthographically transcribed from the evening BBC News at Six and the ITV1 News at 6:30 in the UK, and the evening RAI Tg1 and Canale 5 Tg5 at 8:00 in

² For detailed information about the research project visit <http://www.intune.it> (last accessed 30 April 2011).

Italy, from 12 February to 6 April 2007.³ These subcorpora include both public service broadcasters, BBC and RAI, and commercial ones, ITV and Canale 5, in both the UK and Italy, as they cover the most popular sources of television news information in the two countries. Data collection was not based on a prearranged selection of news topics, therefore anything that was reported over the two months of data collection was included even though a detailed catalogue of the news items included was sketched afterwards; the catalogue was used in the annotation process to make important contextual information available during the analysis, as the following section will make clear.

3. Data and methodology

Starting from previous studies focusing on the structure of TV news bulletins (Haarman and Lombardo 2009), a specific XML annotation has been added following the TEI Guidelines (Sperberg-McQueen and Burnard 2007) so that the corpus could be indexed and analysed with *XAIRA*⁴. The transcript of each news programme has been encoded in a single text in order to make explicit for each file metadata relative to source, date, the structure of news stories and speaker information. The annotation is essential in order to make use of relevant contextual information in the interpretation of linguistic data combining a quantitative and qualitative approach (Marchi and Venuti 2009).

The British and Italian TV sub-corpora of the *IntUne* data (which we will refer to as the TV *IntUne* corpus hereafter) consist of 322,745 and 290,469 words respectively. The more specific breakdown, included in Table 1 below, shows also that in both countries state news programmes tend to be slightly longer than those broadcasted by private networks.

TV news program	Running words	<i>Europe/Europa</i>	ptw	Hit texts	Texts
BBC (state)	177510	42	0.24	19	40

³ The TV corpus does not include the weekend news programmes in order to enhance comparability between the subcorpora since weekday and weekend news programmes may vary in the two countries.

⁴ *XAIRA* (XML Aware Indexing and Retrieval Architecture) is a freely available software developed by Lou Burnard and Tony Dodd at the Oxford University Computing Services.

ITV1	145235	22	0.15	14	39
Tg1 (state)	148139	84	0.57	30	37
Tg5	142330	25	0.18	15	37
Total	613214	173	0.28	78	155

Table 1. Distribution of *Europe/Europa* in the TV *IntUne* corpus.

Table 1 displays the distribution of the two terms *Europe/Europa* in the four sub-corpora in terms of total number of occurrences, normalised frequency and number of news programmes. The per thousand word (ptw) frequency demonstrates that the Italian *Europa* occurs 0.75 ptw compared to the 0.39 ptw of the British *Europe*, nearly twice as often, but also that most occurrences are found in the RAI Tg1, i.e. the Italian TV state channel, and that the frequency of *Europe* is higher in the BBC news programme than in the ITV one.

The number of occurrences per text is a key element in the analysis of the overall distribution since it indicates how often a news programme refers to our key terms in the time span covered by our corpus. Tg1 is the only programme to refer to *Europa* on a nearly daily basis, thirty out of the total thirty-seven days. In the BBC, *Europe* is found in half of the programmes, while it is found in slightly less than a third of the ITV ones. A similar trend can be observed in the Italian data since *Europa* is less frequently used in Tg5 than in TG1, as it appears in only 40% of the news programmes. These figures show a general trend: Italian news programmes talk about Europe more than the British ones, both in terms of raw and normalised frequencies as well as in terms of daily coverage⁵. They also highlight how the State channels focus on Europe more than the private channels in both countries.

From this purely quantitative overview, our analysis moved to a more detailed examination of all the occurrences of *Europe/Europa*, which will be presented in the sections that follow. In analysing our data we took into consideration whether *Europe/Europa* has been uttered by *reality* or *accessed* voices, whether the term refers metonymically to the European Union or more literally to the European continent, and in what kind of news reporting the term is used, e.g. hard news vis-à-vis Sports or Home vis-à-vis Foreign affairs news.

⁵ These findings seem to confirm the results of a previous research project concerning the role of *accessed* voices in British, French, Italian and Polish TV news programmes (Venuti, De Candia, Deckert and Ropers, forthcoming).

4. Data analysis

4.1. BBC news

In analysing the data, it was found that the BBC sub-corpus has forty-two occurrences of *Europe*. Most occurrences (thirty-five) were found in utterances by journalists, while the remaining occurrences were found in utterances by legitimated people (LPs). The distribution of *Europe* according to the topic of the news items shows that the majority of the occurrences were found in news items about Home and International Politics (14), and in hard news (12), with the remaining occurrences were distributed between Economy (7) and Environment (5). Four occurrences are simply related to the news presentation routine with the news presenter introducing the “Europe editor” as shown in Example 1 below.

1 Now, it is fifty years since the treaty which led to the birth of the European Union was signed in Rome. But is it a happy birthday? Well our **Europe** editor Mark Mardell has been to sample opinion in some of **Europe**’s capitals. (23 March – Dermot Murnaghan, news presenter)

Example 1 contains two occurrences of *Europe*. The latter shows another tendency that emerged from our analysis, i.e. the metonymical use of the term to refer to the European Union. The metonymical usage accounts for half of the occurrences of the term used by journalists. In the example under investigation the inference can be made easily as the news presenter introduces his utterance with reference to the birth of the EU, while in other examples it is the actions that a personified *Europe* carries out that make the identification with the political institution explicit, as in the following example: “[David Cameron] says **Europe** must look to future generations, tackle global warming and global poverty” (6 March – Carole Walker, reporter). It is worth mentioning that the two occurrences of *Europe* in Example 1 are the only ones found during the BBC news programme on the day of the celebrations that took place in Rome. The Italian data, as we will illustrate further on will show a very different tendency.

Example 2 below shows another usage of *Europe*. In the report about the development of the Heathrow airport, the journalist refers to Europe as a geographical entity. This kind of reference has been found fifteen times in journalists’ contributions and the term tends to co-occur with

other words referring to physical entities (“mainland Europe”, “Eastern Europe”, “regions of Europe”) or with verbs describing movement across the continent (“ships them all over Europe”, “flights across Europe”, “travel all over Europe”).

2 It will change the aviation map. BMI, based at Heathrow, will try to launch services to a wide range of US cities like LA. Virgin is looking to start routes from mainland **Europe** to the States. And some of the new business class airlines, MaxJet perhaps, may want to try to muscle in, too. [...] (22 March 2007 – Tom Symonds, reporter)

As compared to the 37 occurrences of Europe in utterances by journalists, there are only seven occurrences of *Europe* in utterances by *accessed* voices, and they are all by LPs, nearly all of them by politicians. LPs tend to use *Europe* to refer to the European Union as a personified entity carrying out actions as in Example 3, or through comparisons with other countries as in this utterance by Tony Blair.

3 If we can agree an ambitious set of targets for **Europe**, that gives us a far greater position of strength and leverage than to say to the other countries, notably America and China and India, let us try and agree the principles of a new deal for all of us to play our part in reducing these damaging emissions. (8 March – Tony Blair LP)

Example 4 is also representative of another pattern that can be found in all four sub-corpora but which is relatively more significant in the British data: the link between the EU, environmental issues and climate change.

4 I think we will enact some types of mandatory limits on greenhouse gas emissions. Something that **Europe** has done with regard to much of the economy there. And the question is how do we structure that and how aggressive are the targets that we identify for emission reductions. (14 February – Jeff Dingman, LP)

4.2. ITV news

In comparison with the 42 occurrences in the BBC sub-corpus, the analysis of the ITV sub-corpus showed a total of 22 occurrences of *Europe* across all participants. However, the majority of these instances (19) were found to occur in journalist data whereas only three occurrences were identified in utterances by LPs.

Our previously compiled news catalogue allowed us to determine in which news topics these occurrences were used and to learn more about the usage of *Europe* in the corpus. We discovered that *Europe* was used in the context of Home and Foreign Politics (7 occurrences), hard news (6 occurrences), Environment (4 occurrences) and Economy (1 occurrence). For each of these news topics we looked at how *Europe* was depicted across the different categories.

We found that in 4 instances news presenters talked about Europe mainly in the context of hard news where *Europe* was used in reference to a ‘Europe correspondent’ reporting on the hard news topic. This was interpreted as part of the most typical aspect of news presentation routine, which was thus less important for the purpose of this study. In 4 further occurrences *Europe* was used as geographical information of the news item being reported. The same usage of *Europe* as a geographical entity was found in reporter and correspondent data where a total of nine occurrences of *Europe* were retrieved – with reference to hard news, Economy, Politics and Environment news topics – and this was also the most frequent representation of Europe for this specific sub-set of data. Example 5 shows an instance of the usage of *Europe* as a geographical entity:

5 It is more than a week since police arrested and tortured more than a hundred opposition supporters, including the leadership. [...] Opposition MP Nelson Chimisa is the latest casualty. He was savagely beaten at Harare Airport on his way to **Europe**. [...] (20 March – Neil Connery, reporter)

Another interesting finding that emerged from our data is the metonymical usage of *Europe* as a personified institution, across all participants with reference to Politics and Environment news topics only. Example 6 illustrates such a usage in correspondent news talk.

6 Well, you are right. What Britain is trying to do at the moment. It is trying to work up some pressure to encourage other leaders, both around **Europe** and in the UN to take some action. They are hoping to galvanise some support following claims by Morgan Tsvangirai, the opposition leader, that he was beaten by police. [...] Today the Prime Minister's spokesman says he will be working to push for more action both from human rights members of the United Nations, as well as his European partners. (16 March – Chris Ship, Correspondent)

Example 6 shows how the correspondent was referring to *Europe* as an institution of political leaders entitled to take actions with respect to international affairs decisions. Even though the journalist was not specifically talking about the EU, the expression “around Europe” may point to a geographical entity rather than an institution, he was referring to different European governments’ involvement in this political support, which is also underlined by the reference to “European partners” as well as to other international institutions (the United Nations) from the viewpoint of the British Prime Minister. This interpretation of *Europe* as a political institution stems from the parallelism between “around Europe” and “in the UN” in the same sentence, and the more explicit one at the end of the utterance between “members of the United nations” and “European partners”.

While journalists seemed to use Europe as a geographical and institutional entity, the analysis of LPs offered a different perception, although the analysis is based on a very limited number of instances. Not surprisingly, LP talk about Europe was found in news about politics only. In such news items *Europe* was depicted as an institution, as in the previous example. Example 7, where policies introduced in California by Governor Schwarzenegger and policies adopted by the European Union are compared, serves as an illustration:

7 I think that one of the important things about this debate is to say to people there is a way we can be responsible members of society, but without trying to get to the stage where you say to people in **Europe** you must never travel or take the airplane. That is not going to happen. (13 March – Tony Blair, LP)

4.3 Tg1

The analysis of the Italian sub-corpora, beginning with Tg1, results in somewhat different findings. As shown in Table 1 the Italian public service broadcaster's news programme accounts for nearly half of the total occurrences of *Europe/Europa*. This may find an explanation if we take into account the distribution of the term over time, as shown in Table 2 below.

Date	BBC	ITV	Tg1	Tg5
12 February		1	3	1
13 February		1	1	2
14 February	4		3	3
15 February	1	4		1
16 February		1		1
20 February			4	
21 February			3	
22 February			2	1
23 February	3			
26 February		2		
27 February	2		2	2
28 February			1	2
01 March	2	1	1	1
02 March			2	
05 March	3		2	1
06 March	4	1		4
07 March	3		2	
08 March	2	1	1	
09 March	3	5	3	
12 March			2	
13 March	1	1	2	
14 March			1	
15 March			1	

16 March		1		
19 March			3	4
20 March	2	1	3	
21 March			6	
22 March	2		6	
23 March	2		23	
26 March			1	1
27 March	1			
28 March		1	2	1
29 March	1			
30 March	1	1		
03 April	1		2	
04 April	4			
05 April			1	
06 April			1	

Table 2. Time distribution of Europe/Europa in the TV IntUne corpus.

Twenty-three occurrences, 27% of all the Tg1 occurrences, are from 23 March 2007, the day of the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome. The celebrations for the anniversary took place in Rome and this partly explains why this emphasis was given to the event in the reports of the evening news. If we compare this finding with the British data, we find that there are no occurrences of *Europe* in the ITV news programme and only two occurrences in that of the BBC, which seems to confirm that there is a different attitude towards the reporting of this particular event (Thornborrow, Haarman and Duguid, in press) and of the EU in general (De Candia and Venuti 2010) from British and Italian broadcasters.

Examples 8 and 9 below are indicative of the emphasis of the reporting in Tg1 and of the general tendency of using *Europa* metonymically to refer to European political institutions (60 occurrences, more than 70% of the total). In the Italian data the personified Europe is usually preceded by the definite article as in “l’Europa” (Example 8) or sometimes the indefinite article as in “una Europa unita” (Example 9). As in the British data the personified Europe has to perform actions

(“deve superare”/must overcome, and be “capace di prendersi le proprie responsabilità”/be able to take on its own responsibilities) which imply a personified actor and usually co-occurs with other countries, in our examples the United States.

8 Buonasera e benvenuti al TG1. Cinquant’anni fa i Trattati di Roma avviarono l’unificazione europea, una pagina storica celebrata oggi, l’**Europa** deve superare il punto morto istituzionale, ha detto il Capo dello Stato Napolitano che, in una intervista esclusiva al TG1, esclude fratture tra **Europa** e Stati Uniti, ascoltiamo l’intervista di Gianni Riotta al Capo dello Stato.

[Good evening and welcome to Tg1. Fifty years ago the Rome Treaty started the European unification, a historic day still celebrated today. **Europe** must overcome the institutional standstill, said the Head of State, Napolitano, who, in an exclusive Tg1 interview, denies fractures between **Europe** and the United States. And now Gianni Riotta’s interview with the Head of State] (23 March – Attilio Romita, news presenter)

9 Non credo proprio, io penso che gli Stati Uniti comprendano molto bene che anche per loro una **Europa** unita e capace di prendersi le proprie responsabilità è un interlocutore prezioso.

[I don’t believe so, I think the U.S. understands very well that a united **Europe**, able to take on its own responsibilities, is an invaluable partner.] (23 March – Massimo D’Alema, LP)

Another recurrent feature of the Tg1 data is the usage of *Europa* as a point of reference by Italian politicians. In our data when politicians are asked to comment on the Italian political situation, as in Example 10, they tend to compare what is happening in Italy to the present situation in Europe (10 occurrences), showing the extent to which the EU is used as a positive benchmark in political argumentation in Italy.

10 [...] ed è il Parlamento che deve realizzare la più larga convergenza possibile per ampliare i diritti dei cittadini anche in Italia come accade in tutta **Europa**.

[It’s up to the Parliament to create the largest possible convergence to make civil rights more extensive in Italy as is the case in the whole of **Europe**] (28 February, Alfonso Pecoraro Scanio, LP)

Compared to the British data there are fewer instances of the usage of *Europa* as a geographical entity since even when Europe is described in its wholeness, “in tutta Europa” as in the previous example, the reference is to the political rather than the geographical entity. Example 11 shows one of the few occurrences (11 in all) of the usage of *Europa* as a geographical entity in a hard news report on the arrest of a band of criminals.

11 Una banda che aveva molta dimestichezza con le armi, che di norma non venivano usate, nelle rapine nessun ferito, per molti dei componenti un passato da militare e l'organizzazione dei colpi era da autentici professionisti del crimine; arrivavano dai paesi baltici, la base era in Estonia, il raggio d'azione in tutta **Europa**.

[A gang, with extensive experience with weapons, which were not usually used, no injuries during robberies, many of whom have past experience in the military, and the organisation is that of authentic professionals in crime. They came from the Baltic region, their base was in Estonia and they acted all over **Europe**] (21 February – Maxia Zandonai, reporter)

4.4. Tg5

As compared with the 84 occurrences in the Tg1 sub-corpus, the Tg5 presented a total of 25 occurrences of *Europa* across all participants. No instances of *Europa* were found in correspondents' utterances. The majority of occurrences appeared in reporter data (11 occurrences), followed by LPs (19 occurrences) with only a few occurrences by news presenters. Europe was mainly mentioned in news items about Politics (14 occurrences), hard news and Economy (3 occurrences each), with limited instances in news on Environment (2 occurrences), Education, soft news and Sports (1 occurrence), across all participant categories. As in the British data, there are no references to *Europa* for the fiftieth anniversary celebrations by the Italian commercial broadcaster.

More specifically, we found that news presenters mainly referred to Europe in the context of Politics and hard news where *Europa* was seen as a means to provide audiences with geographical references and to talk about European institutions. A similar usage was also found in reporters' data where journalists used *Europa* in Economy and Environment related news, as well as soft news. Examples 12 and 13 show how *Europa* was

presented in news presenter and reporter talk as a geographical entity and as a political institution respectively.

12 Questa volta la Polizia di Copenaghen è arrivata in forze, con elicotteri, cannoni ad acqua e gas lacrimogeni, come dovesse affrontare i black block in una riunione del G8. [...] I ragazzi avevano resistito allo sgombero già a dicembre, questa volta a dargli man forte erano arrivati giovani da tutta **Europa** guidati dal gruppo degli autonomi hanno scagliato contro gli agenti sassi [...].

[This time the Copenhagen police intervened with helicopters, water cannons and tear gas, as if they were facing black bloc protesters at a G8 summit. In December the occupants had already resisted the dispersal. This time young people from all over **Europe** had gathered to help, under the coordination of autonomous groups who had thrown stones at the police officers.] (1 March – Domitilla Savignoni, reporter)

13 Anche l'**Europa** bacchetta la Croazia per le parole che sono state usate nei confronti del nostro Paese sul caso delle Foibe e oggi a Strasburgo c'era proprio il Capo di Stato Napolitano.

[Europe too criticised Croatia for the words that were directed to our country regarding the Foibe killings, and today the Head of State Napolitano was in Strasbourg.] (14 March – Alberto Bilà, news presenter)

As already observed, in the Italian data a personified Europe is signalled grammatically by the presence of the definite article and of verbs implying a personified actor as in “Europe too criticised Croatia” in the previous example. Another interesting aspect which emerged from our data was a usage of *Europa* as an institution, across all participants, specifically in almost all instances (8 occurrences) of *Europa* in utterances by LPs and all news items about Politics. Example 14 illustrates this usage in Italian LP news talk, where direct references to other European countries, Germany and Italy, and to the need for an EU Constitution to trigger the conceptualisation of a personified entity.

14 La Germania e l'Italia hanno la stessa visione dell'**Europa**, si passano in questo momento perché l'**Europa** possa dotarsi di una Costituzione che è fondamentale per il funzionamento dell'Unione Europea [...].

[Germany and Italy share the same idea of **Europe**, right now they are working so that **Europe** can adopt a Constitution which is fundamental

for the functioning of the European Union] (19 March, Antonio Puri Purini)

5. Concluding Remarks

The analysis of *Europe/Europa* in the four sub-corpora has highlighted two major trends in the two-month coverage included in the TV *IntUne* corpus: Italian broadcast news programmes tend to pay greater attention to issues concerning Europe and the EU than their British counterparts, and, regardless of the country of origin, public service broadcasters devote more time to European issues than commercial ones do. Another general trend that emerged is that British news programmes focus also on environmental and economic issues when dealing with Europe, whereas Italian ones mainly talk about Europe in the context of Home and Foreign Politics.

This is particularly true for the state RAI Tg1. As we have highlighted, great emphasis is given by this news programme to the celebrations for the signing of the Treaty of Rome, with politicians and journalists commenting and reporting on both the birth of a “united Europe” and the future that awaits “our Union”. But even if we set aside the occurrences of *Europa* from 23 March, we still have a majority of occurrences of the usage of the term as a political institution (40 occurrences) and a relatively high number of occurrences in utterances by LPs, usually by politicians (11 occurrences). This points to another pattern which is specific to Tg1 reporting. Italian politicians often use Europe as a positive benchmark to evaluate events and policies specifically related to Italian society.

Whereas the BBC news programme does devote attention to Europe as a political institution, the ITV news programme appears to show little interest in the actions of the European Union. Not only has ITV the fewest occurrences of Europe, it also uses the term mainly to refer to the geographic entity except in those rare cases when the news item concerns international politics. This may be seen as a confirmation of previous studies that highlighted how commercial television usually provides less news about issues of European integration (Peter and de Vreese, 2004) and that EU news items were consistently more visible on public broadcasters, “results showed that [...] public broadcasting had over twice as much EU news as did commercial television news” (De Vreese et al. 2006: 496).

The analysis has shown that there are cultural differences in the portrayal of *Europe/Europa* in the British and Italian TV news programmes. Italian news programmes give greater emphasis to European issues and they do so mainly in the framework of International and Home news. In these reports, Europe is often referred to as an example, a positive benchmark for Italian politicians; this finding seems to confirm the outcome of a recent study (Caimotto 2010) that focused on the relationship between foreign, mainly Anglo-American, politics and the Italian press coverage of Silvio Berlusconi's government. On the other hand, in the British news *Europe* is more frequently used as a geographical entity, especially in hard news reports, and it is never used as a reliable point of reference for British politics. These findings may point to the different status Europe and European Institutions have in media reporting in the two countries.

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